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must always remain one of the most valuable contributions ever made to the investigation of the subject of currency, and is rarely quoted without respectful deference, save on the floor of Congress.

2. — *Théophile Gautier, Souvenirs Intimes.* Par ERNEST FEYDEAU. Paris : E. Plon. 1874.

Histoire du Romantisme, Suivie de Notices Romantiques, etc. Par THÉOPHILE GAUTIER. Paris : Charpentier. 1874.

THE admirers of Théophile Gautier will be pleased to hear that a well-earned honor is to be bestowed on his literary remains. The immense number of short articles — criticisms, *feuilletons*, sketches, notices — scattered through the newspapers and magazines in which he earned his daily bread are to be gathered into volumes and given to the world under an intelligent and sympathetic editorial supervision. Two volumes have already appeared : one entitled *Les Jeunes-France*, the second and more important baptized for the occasion as we have indicated. We ourselves rejoice greatly in this undertaking, for we confess to a peculiar and, in its nature, almost inexpressible kindness for the author of the *Voyage en Espagne* and *Emaux et Camées*. His writings present themselves with such modest pretensions that it is easy to underestimate them. He wrote from day to day, from hour to hour (in the morning paper and the evening paper), his exquisite prose, flanked on one side by the telegraphic gossip of the Agence Havas, and on the other by the advertisement of the Révalescière Dubarry. His work was a lifelong, ceaseless, restless improvisation, and his themes for the most part, at best, but a nine days' wonder. And yet it may really be said of him, that he has hardly written a line that is not worth reprinting. We never read ten consecutive lines from his pen, — tossed off though they may have been on the most trivial occasion, — without feeling irresistibly charmed, without seeming to hear the tread of the Muse, if in but a single foot-fall. Gautier was blessed with a perception of material beauty so intense and comprehensive that he was unable to write five lines without creating a lovely image or ministering in some odd fashion to the delight of the eyes. Art was his divinity, and he worshipped her by example as well as by dogma. He forged himself, at the outset of his career, a perfect style, and his lavish application of it has always reminded us of the conduct of the heroes of old-fashioned romances, who pay their debts by breaking off a bit of their gold chain. Gautier paid out his chain, as it were, in larger and smaller pieces, but the

fragment, whatever its size, always contained a portion of the original metal. For many minds—minds of an ascetic and utilitarian temper—he will always have a limited interest, or rather an unlimited repulsiveness; but for the happy majority, as we imagine it, who are blessed with an eternal relish for the pictorial, whether rendered by the pen or by the brush, this projected complement to his published volumes will give a larger outline to his genius. As we recede from him with the lapse of time, and his figure is lighted by this intensified glow, we more freely perceive how rare and perfect a genius it was. Nothing probably is easier than to exaggerate Gautier's merits, or rather to pervert his claims; but to our sense we should lose more by making light of them than by commemorating them in unstinted measure. In his own way, Gautier was simply perfect, and we have had not many great talents in these latter years of whom the same can be said. Few have been so wholly of one piece, of so unmingled a strain; so pure, compact, serene, so in tune with themselves. This was the case with Gautier from the first, and there is something extremely respectable in the way in which through forty years of possible intellectual corruption he preserved the beautiful unity of his inspiration. He had an extraordinary intellectual simplicity. The late M. Feydeau, in a volume of *Souvenirs Intimes*, painfully compounded of triviality and pretentiousness, has attempted to render his friend the cruel service of establishing the contrary. He talks of him as a great thinker and a profound scholar. M. Feydeau's indiscreet adulation will provoke a smile in those who have breathed the atmosphere, so unweighted with a moral presence, so unstirred by the breath of reflection, which pervades equally our author's most ardent verse and most deliberate prose. Gautier's simplicity is his alpha and his omega, and the all-sufficient explanation of much that, in a complex nature, would have savored of offence. He never judged morality; he knew no more about it than a Fiji-Islander about coal-smoke. His sole mission in the world was to make pictures, and he discharged it with a singleness of sympathy which even his possibly more spiritualized ghost will shudder to see his posthumous eulogists attempting to discredit. His pictorial faculty was unsurpassed; he was one of the first of descriptive poets. This surely is glory enough, and in the very interest of refined enjoyment we protest against all extension or qualification of it. For it is not in the least paradoxical to say that Gautier would have been a much less estimable writer if he had been in the least a more edifying one. Nature had furnished him with an unequalled apparatus for æsthetic perception and verbal portraiture, and she had attempted, in the intellectual line, to do nothing

else. To preserve the balance she had contented herself with giving him an imperturbable moral amenity. Those who have read to any purpose the *Voyage en Espagne* and the *Capitaine Fracasse*, to say nothing of that tremendous monument of juvenile salubrity, *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, in which the attempt to seem vicious is like a pair of burnt-cork mustaches smirched over lips still redolent of a mother's milk, will know what we mean when we say that Gautier is almost grotesquely good. His temperament is as full of *bonhomie* as his imagination of refinement. He occasionally pointed a period with a dash of sarcasm ; but such a missile, in his hands, did execution hardly less gentle than a feather pillow. This almost helpless-looking moral simplicity and benignity in Gautier, as it shows in union with his lifelong appeal to all the delightful material influences of life, is the source of that part of our good-will for our author which we just now called inexpressible. In one's admiration for him, in this spirit, there is something of compassion. He seems to be, in a manner, the unrequited sport of Nature. He gives her all his attention, his love, and his zeal ; year in and year out he gazes at her, waits on her, catches her every image and mood and tone ; and she, sitting there in her splendors and seeing herself mirrored in a style which never ceased to develop till its polished surface had reflected her from head to foot, never drops into his conscience, by way of reward, a single vivifying germ ; never by her grateful breath transforms him for a day from the poet who merely observes and describes into the poet who conceives and creates. All this, to our sense, if we are not over-fanciful, gives Gautier an odd sort of isolated, unsupported, unfriended air in the midst of the beautiful material world to which he spent his life in paying exquisite compliments. We do not really react upon natural impressions and assert our independence, until these impressions have been absorbed into our moral life and become a mysterious part of moral passion. Poor Gautier seems to stand forever in the chill external air which blows over the surface of things ; above his brilliant horizon there peeped no friendly refuge of truth purely intellectual, where he could rake over the embers of philosophy, and rest his tired eyes among the shadows of the unembodied.

M. Feydeau was, according to his own account, for many years an intimate friend of Gautier and the confidant of his most personal pleasures and pains. It was his habit to take notes during this period of all noteworthy incidents, and he aspires in his little volume to play the part of a miniature Boswell. Unfortunately, we get a more lively sense of M. Feydeau's own personality than of that of his weightier friend ; and we may say in parenthesis, and without an infraction of

charity, considering on this and on other occasions the frankness of the author's self-exposure, that a less attractive personality has rarely sought to exhibit itself in literature. His volume, however, reminds us pertinently enough of the intellectual atmosphere in which Gautier lived and worked. It was an atmosphere which imperiously urged all who breathed it to the cultivation of the picturesque in some form or other, — painting or the drama, the *feuilleton* or the novel. "Art," says M. Flaubert, was his friend's master-passion : his life was passed in the zealous appreciation of clever pictures and new plays ; in going from the studio to the theatre and from the theatre to the printing-office. There have doubtless been circles far more prolific in valuable generalizations about art, — circles in Berlin and Düsseldorf, in which the philosophy of the matter was opened up in a far more abysmal fashion over pipes and *Schoppen* any night in the year ; but there has probably been in our time no more exquisite and penetrating a sentiment of the subject than was to be found in the half-Bohemian *coterie* of which M. Feydeau's "Théo" was the high-priest. From this *coterie* every human consideration not immediately bearing upon some possible artistic interpretation of sensuous pleasure seems to have been unanimously excluded. "Politics" were religiously tabooed, the sense of the company being unexceptionally that producers in their line should have a good strong money-spending, picture-ordering government to take care of them and guard them well against the rising tide of democracy and utilitarianism, but never be bothered with principles and details. When, on the close of the war (which brought to Gautier a good deal of personal misfortune), he has occasion, like any other good citizen, to treat his friend to a little talk (very sensible talk) about the prospects of France, the duties of Frenchmen, and the question of the "*revanche*," he thinks it necessary, according to M. Feydeau's report, to make an elaborate apology for venturing upon such unfamiliar ground, even in the freedom of a *tête-à-tête*. But perhaps the strongest impression we get from M. Feydeau is of the uninterrupted laboriousness of our author's career. Gautier was to the end a poor man. His exquisite literary work, though relished by the delicate of taste all over the world, never procured him anything but a decent subsistence. He could never treat himself to that supreme luxury of the artist, — the leisure to do a certain fine thing to please himself. He was chained to the newspapers ; to the hour of his death he was hammering with his golden mallet on the resonant anvil of the daily press. His vivid images, his charming fancies, his wealth of color and metaphor and perception, his polished perfection and unerring felicity of style, through all of which, as we read, there seems to circulate

such a current of joyous spontaneity and leisurely appreciation, were to the writer's own sense all mere daily drudgery, paid for by the line, — the goaded effort of a mind haunted by visions of hungry mouths and unpaid bills. In this daily pressure of labor and need, it is immensely to Gautier's credit that he never, for three words together, was false to his own rigid literary conscience. The work, under the spur, was not only done, but perfectly done. It was often done in the printing-office on the edge of a smutted table, with a dozen people talking; but there is never a case in which the reader of the finished article is not free to fancy it may have been excogitated in luxurious leisure, amid the fumes of a perfumed pipe, by a genius in a Persian dressing-gown reclining under a bower of roses. The conjunction of Gautier's hurried, overworked, oppressed manner of life with the indescribably exquisite, chiselled quality ("chiselled" is the word that always comes to us) of his prose, is one of the interesting facts of literature. It is just such a fact as the Academy was bound to take cognizance of, but he knocked more than once in vain at the door of rusty hinges; it remained his privilege to complete, with Balzac and Madame Sand for his companions, the trio of the great excluded imaginative writers.

We should like to quote, for curiosity's sake, a few lines from a letter of M. Gustave Flaubert, the author of *Madame Bovary*. M. Flaubert was an intimate friend of Gautier, and M. Feydeau prints a note received from him at the time of the poet's death: —

"Je ne plains pas notre ami défunt. Au contraire, je l'envie profondément. Que ne suis-je à pourrir à sa place? Pour l'agrément qu'on a dans ce bas monde, autant s'en aller le plus vite possible. Le 4 Septembre a inauguré un état de choses qui ne nous regarde plus. *Nous sommes de trop*. On nous hait et on nous méprise. Voilà le vrai. Donc, bonsoir! Pauvre cher Théo! C'est de cela qu'il est mort (du dégoût de l'infection moderne). C'était un grand lettré et un grand poète."

M. Feydeau gives his friend's letter with the reverse of an invidious intention, but its effect is the same as that of his own reflections throughout his volume when he quotes himself or speaks *in propria persona*. Gautier's younger comrades are a corrupt generation, and their arid cynicism only serves to throw into relief the admirable geniality of the elder writer, — the happy salubrity of a temperament which could spend forty years in the lap of tendencies predestined to all manner of ultimate morbid efflorescence, and yet preserve its sweetness to the end. MM. Feydeau and Flaubert, M. Dumas *fils*, and a dozen others are the dregs of a school, — the running to seed of the famous generation of 1830. Gautier had the good fortune

to belong to the elder race, and to enjoy the good health which, if it came from nothing else, would come from his being original. The second of the volumes which serve as the text of our remarks may be regarded as his contribution to the history of that extraordinary literary revolution. A "History of Romanticism" is a rather ambitious title for what is hardly more than a string of picturesque anecdotes and reminiscences of the author's early comrades, reinforced by a series of obituary notices of the veterans in the grand army, published as they dropped one by one out of the march. But it was to the picturesque side of the movement of 1830 that Gautier was especially attached, and its hundred outward eccentricities could not have found a more sympathetic and amusing chronicler. The great flood-tide which, with the coming in of Louis Philippe, detached from their immemorial anchorage so many of the old divinities and dogmas in French art and letters has, by this time, wellnigh subsided; has, in fact, in great part retreated into various quiet coves and corners, under watch of the declining star of genius which has earned its rest. But it behooves us to remember well what a mighty tide it was, and what a wondrous work it achieved. The eighteen years of the reign of Louis Philippe were certainly, for art and letters, one of the great moments of the human mind, and quite worthy, proportions observed, to rank with the age of Pericles, the age of Elizabeth, or the Florentine Renaissance. It offers a splendid list of names, as Gautier here strings them together: "Lamartine, Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas, Alfred de Musset, George Sand, Balzac, Sainte-Beuve, Auguste Barbier, Delacroix, Louis Boulanger, Ary Scheffer, Déveria, Decamps, David d'Angers, Barye, Hector Berlioz, Frédéric Lemaître, and Madame Dorval." He omits Prosper Mérimée, Michelet, and himself from the writers, Horace Vernet from the painters, and Mademoiselle Rachel from the actors. All these great talents worked together, lived together very much, and had a multitude of common passions, hopes, and aspirations. They were young and poor, and conscious of their strength; all herded together in the attics and *entresols* of a brilliant, inspiring capital, and inflamed with a generous comradeship as well as with artistic ardor. The band of the young *romantiques* had its wild oats to sow, and it scattered a plentiful crop; but English readers, in judging the explosive temper of this Parisian *Sturm und Drang*, must remember how long art and letters in France had groaned under the weight of inanimate tradition. Literature was like Sindbad the Sailor with the Old Man of the Sea on his back. It resorted naturally enough to the most frolicsome pace and most fantastic gambols to unseat the monstrous incubus. Gautier says, in all but perfect earnest, that the

old French theatre contained but two picturesque lines. Corneille had risked

“Cette obscure clarté qui tombe des étoiles.”

And in Molière's *Tartuffe* Cléante had remarked that

“La campagne à présent n'est pas beaucoup fleurie.”

To protest against the uniform grayness of classicism, it seemed to Gautier himself but half enough to write the glowing pictorial scenes of *Albertus* and take the liberties of *Mademoiselle de Maupin*; to be consistent, he thought it proper to let his hair grow down to his waist, to wear yellow Turkish slippers in the street, and to go to the first representation of Victor Hugo's *Hernani* in the crimson waistcoat which afterwards became legendary. He gives in the present volume the history of the crimson waistcoat, disentangled from legendary perversion, and informs us that the garment in question was composed of the finest scarlet satin and was laced behind like a woman's corset. Of information of this calibre the present chapters are largely composed; they make no pretensions to being a philosophic history. Philosophy, indeed, was so scantily represented either at that or at any period in the career of literary romanticism, that we wonder, as we think of it, whence came the saving discretion which kept it from submersion in its own excesses. All the intellectual force of the movement seemed concentrated in a passionate sense of the “plastic,” — of a plastic which should especially embody color. But all this unballasted æstheticism gives one a lively idea of the quantity of clear genius diffused through the group. The intuitive, instinctive side of art was magnificently exemplified. In spite of the lightness of Gautier's treatment of his theme, his chapters may provoke a good deal of serious reflection. The list of the romanticists who drew the prize and grasped the laurel is very short, compared with that of their innumerable comrades who, as the French say, never “arrived.” Gautier's allusions to these abortive careers are rather melancholy reading: so many were called, and so few chosen; so many were young and ardent and confident, and so few, relatively, lived and matured to exchange the young confidence for the old certainty. But we see here, as in the history of every important intellectual movement, that the failures fertilized the soil for success, that nothing great is done without a school, and that to produce a hundred finished masterpieces there must be ten thousand vain attempts. However many the masterpieces, it is always a pity there are not more; but one must nevertheless pronounce happy in its day the generation which, while the verdict was yet in abeyance, cared so universally and ardently to win

the good cause. We have had great pleasure, we may say in conclusion, in reading the last division of the present volume, the *Tableau des Progrès de la Poésie Française depuis 1830*. The work was drawn up by request of the Imperial government with a series of cognate reports from other hands on the occasion of the Exhibition of 1867. It was perfectly in character that it should be "genial," and the place of criticism is kept throughout by exquisite, sympathetic, and, in the literal sense of the word, imaginative description. It is not often, we suppose, that in a government report one stumbles on such a passage as these lines upon Théodore de Banville : —

"La chaste pâleur et le contour tranquille des marbres ne suffisaient pas à ce coloriste. Les déesses étalaient dans l'onde ou dans la nuée des chairs de nacre, veinées d'azur, fouettées de rose, inondées de chevelures rutilantes au ton d'ambre et de topaze, et des rondeurs d'une opulence qu'eût évité l'art grec. Les roses, les lys, l'azur, l'or, la pourpre, l'hyacinthe abondent chez Banville ; il revêt tout ce qu'il touche d'un voile tramé de rayons, et ses idées, comme des princesses de fées, se promènent dans les prairies d'émeraude, avec des robes couleur du temps, couleur du soleil, et couleur de la lune."

H. J., JR.

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3. — *Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents*. A Memorial by his Son, THOMAS CONSTABLE. Edinburgh : Edmonston and Douglas. 1873. 3 vols.

SIR WALTER SCOTT in one of his letters, speaking of the publication of Lord Orford's *Reminiscences*, says : "It is like a man who should brick up a hogshead of cyder, to be drunk half a century afterwards, when it could contain little but acidity and vapidty." This expression of opinion was not remembered by Mr. Constable when he published the three volumes before us. Some of the details contained in them might have been interesting if given to the world forty years ago, or embodied in a pamphlet after the financial crisis which ruined his father's house in 1826. The list of Mr. Constable's literary correspondents contains nearly every name of eminence amongst his contemporaries ; but in the notices of their lives, and the letters they wrote, there is little that adds to our information, or enables us to realize more distinctly who or what they were.

Archibald Constable, to whom the greater number of these letters are addressed, began his career as apprentice to Mr. Hill, an Edinburgh bookseller, in 1788, and commenced business on his own account in 1795. In 1804 he concluded a partnership with Mr. Alexander Gibson Hunter of Blackness, whose letters are far the most amusing